557 passing before his door and thus empty him of his nyama. The man
576 grows thin and poor. The griot may bring about his death with evil
778 words, their nyama attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire
564 body of the victim.

The griot's power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the burudyu several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their nyama enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the griot recites a barama without receiving payment, his nyama attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the burudyu is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable nyama of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the tere of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the griot before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the griot generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

[784] 1. If the griot knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the griot in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the griot returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

• [585 561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the griot. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the griot invents a new barama on the spot even though he does not know the device.

584 Though disrupted marriage arrangements are rare, this may happen through a variety of causes and is settled by agreement or, in case of conflict, by arbitrators.

585 Delivery of the bride. Because this act involves a change of status for the parties concerned, it requires the ritual practices of a magical character of which we saw an example in connection with the funeral of a fa. Their purpose is to make sure that change takes place without harm to anyone.

When the payer has fulfilled his obligations and behaved according to custom, the girl must be given to him on the date agreed upon. On that day, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and the fiancé's friends, accompanied by musicians, appear at the home of the girl's parents to receive and lead away the bride. The parents agree, but the girl has disappeared. The newcomers start at once to look for her, but she cannot be found because her relatives and friends help her to hide. The hunt arouses both sides and leads to brawls; as the excitement reaches its height, the girl is found. Only the intervention of the dugu-tigi himself can put an end to the conflict. He gives his permission to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi to take the girl away and advises her to follow.

Then the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and his companions, acting as an escort, [202] take the girl toward the exit from the village. Just as she is about to leave the enclosure, however, she refuses to go a step farther, and the young men pretend to do violence to her in order to force her to accompany them in spite of her cries. She fights and screams until she is beyond the limits of the village territory. Then she suddenly becomes calm, wraps herself in the large piece of cloth given by her fiancé, and gaily follows her companions, who carry her furu-fen' and have by now joined the group of the furu-bolo-ma-tigi. The troop of young men bring up the rear and make a great racket with drums and trumpets and from time to time give the traditional [583] marriage cry: "kuyo! kuyo! (1)."

1. This simulated abduction must be interpreted as a separation rite.

• 525 The well-known cry of the wara-mina-den' of the fiancé's brotherhood is heard at various points along the way; the god is watching over his disciple's fiancée and chasing evil spirits from her path.

When they approach the fiancé's village, the young men go to the head of the procession, while the fiancée's companions take their places behind her. The whole troop begins to dance to the rhythm of the drums and trumpets. The women seem to hold back and take a long time to reach the entrance to the village a few hundred meters away.

At this moment, the wara-mina-den' utters a loud and final cry; his mission is accomplished.

The women of the village welcome the newcomers and lead the girl to her husband's house. Other women join the procession. Several groups of singers are formed, and the dancers proceed slowly to the couple's house. There, in an inner court, the crowd settles down; everyone drinks, eats, dances, or sings as the spirit moves him.

The dressing of the bride begins as soon as she arrives. Her hair is taken down; the string and the beads she wears about her hips are removed; and she is helped with her bath. Then, wrapped in a white skirt cloth, she lies down on the nuptial couch.

Her husband joins her after escaping from his roistering friends.

At daybreak there is a sudden shot. Loud and frequent shouts of "kuyo! kuyo!" rise above singing [203] and the noise of an orchestra. The old women burst into the nuptial hut, carrying warm water for the ablutions. The husband comes out and goes off to sit on a mat in the courtyard with the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and his friends.

The bride appears wrapped in her marriage skirt; behind her the old women wave a piece of linen that gives visible evidence [533] of the accomplishment of intercourse, and dyeli-moso (griot [Ed., feminine]) sing of love. The young girls who accompanied the bride surround her at the exit from the courtyard and lead her to a hut arranged so that she may rest there. For eight days she has all her meals there, and seated on a mat, with a white veil on her head, she spends the days spinning with her companions.

585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her [533] hand. Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a female griot, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. Every- [302] one admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the [481] last time. Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

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the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589 he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and they are considered invulnerable.

826 The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of the water.

553 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the
326 paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man prepares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
782 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days. If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have); the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders him fit to contract marriage.

[i.e., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of the dry season.

583 584 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and the young man's fa begins to pay the bride price which traditionally came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry season bringing fonio, fruits of the karite, and sumbalé (for making sauces), and other products.

583 585 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order: a cow, a bull, a heifer . . .

583 584 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are still given.

584 585 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts. The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bambara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven [826] seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the fonio seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is considered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 764 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

291 [177] designs. European influence has naturally made itself felt in the fashions, and European thread is replacing native cotton thread, but the color symbolism in the bands is retained. Even though European fabrics invade the markets more and more, the traditional clothes remain the most sought after, although they have undergone certain modifications inspired by European fashions even while remaining very original.

291 531 585 Although the Bambara go barefoot, in certain circumstances they make ornamented clogs to give to the new bride. These sandals are decorated with geometric designs, engraved with a hot iron by the blacksmith, that symbolize the twinship, the multiplication of children, the parents, the husband's family, the couple's language, and the sealing of the association. These signs are encircled by the sign of the union of the whole. Also, the whole ritual of taking possession lasts for several days.

302 Coiffure. At the present time, the adult males no longer wear the traditional coiffure consisting of two plaits at the side, but the children still have their hair shaved and braided according to custom. Thus, the uncircumcised boys wear a crest of hair going from the forehead to the nape of the neck, while the rest of the head is shaved. The crest symbolizes the [99] divine serpent. The children of blacksmiths also wear, at the sides of the head, two circles of hair which are cut by lines representing the forge. When a child is born after the death of several brothers and sisters, only half of his head is shaved in mockery, so that the dya subject to this pretended neglect will decide to stay in the child. The children of Marabouts have their hair shaved in such a manner that it forms a spiral which starts in the middle of the skull and covers the whole head. Afterwards, bands of hair are shaved in a manner to trace a cross on this spiral. The little girls wear a small braid across the forehead, falling on the left side, while married women wear a braid at each side of the head. These braids are made by adding fibers of the da, shining with karite, plaited with the hair. Finally, the women wear 30| 22 gold rings at the ears, images of the 22 primordial elements, or sometimes a single large ring in the form of a crescent closed by threads of red cotton, which is a résumé of the 22 others. These rings keep impure words from the ear, which plays an important [776] role in generation; it is through the ornamentation that the spirits hear what is said to man.

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1. The sinsin, the gnéna of twins, is an exception, as it may also be bought.

inheritance, and rarely by purchase. The gnâ pass from father to son by inheritance, but it is always possible to obtain one by purchase; all that is necessary is to find in the village the number of people needed to make up the staff of the idol, provided one is not opposed by the sorcerer's veto.

Every purchase of a powerful boli occasions celebrations, festivals, and drinking bouts that last from three to eight days. These festivals are like marriage celebrations. Surrounded by his staff, the new fetish owner spends the day offering d'lo, or millet beer, to the many friends who come to congratulate him and give him their gifts. It is not until evening that he leaves his b'lon, or entry hut, and, followed by initiates carrying the idol, goes to the sacred grove or under the trees chosen to be the meeting place henceforth. The night is spent in dancing and shouting hymns.

In the eyes of the Negro to buy a gnâ is to become united with it in a firm and indissoluble way. It is equivalent to marrying the fetish, and they have no other phrase to express their idea, their notion of the matter: "A yé boli fourou, he got married"; "ayé boli fourou gosi, he has stamped and sealed his marriage with the boli" (2); "ne ka fourouboloma faro (3) flé, here is my wedding present";

[583]

2. Fourou gosi: In order to enjoy the marriage lawfully, whoever marries must, in the presence of the head of the village, pay his wife's parents a handful of kola nuts -- usually eleven, one more than the required ten.

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3. Fourouboloma fara: This is the name of the small present of cowrie shells given to a

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/newly married/ couple by their friends. It varies from 40 cowrie shells to 2 kémés, or 160 cowrie shells.

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425 "à taboli konio kera, the marriage of his boli has taken place."
435 The value of a gnâ varies between 30 and 40 francs, and whoever owns one can from then on make them. If one counts the presents given to the maker and to his staff, the dogs, goats, and kola nuts offered in sacrifice on the day of his reception, and finally the beer of the wedding, its value is undoubtedly more than 100 francs.

5. Differences among the Powerful Boli

778 I class all the powerful boli into three main groups. In the first I place those which formerly were the prerogative of kings, princes, and ministers; in the second, those which have neither temple nor sacred grove; and in the third, those which have a temple and a sacred grove, or at least one or the other.

Those of the first group are not at all numerous, and the most popular are the Safolo, the Kongoba, the Nan-Woloko, and the Kouantara. They are usually found in villages which were formerly capitals of cantons or provinces and are in the hands of people whose families have included a kafotigi (head of a canton) or a fama (king or petty king), i.e., a head of a province, a minister of the king on whom the title of ruler (fama) was bestowed.

Everything leads me to think that in the beginning these were merely fetishes responsible for watching over the king and the people of his court, analogous to what above I have called the family boli. At present they have become boli of sects. But although all circumcised men can enter the ranks of those who pay them respect, only married men become initiated, and the orgies in their honor are private orgies whose entire cost is borne by graybeards.

778 According to legend, slaves were sacrificed to these boli in the
782 time of the Bambara kings. Since then the worshippers have been content to offer them millet beer, hens, and goats in addition to the

of her father-in-law nor linger with him in endless conversations, especially when no witnesses are present, and the fiancé is subject to the same rules with regard to his mother-in-law. /206/

In a word, they may no longer even look at each other! If the fiancé dies before the wedding, it is in good taste for the girl to become the fiancée of a younger brother, but if there is no brother she regains her liberty and keeps her bride price. If the fiancée dies, the family usually keeps the bride price they have received; custom permits the fiancé to demand the return of half the bride price but, in the eyes of everyone, to do so would indicate a lack of tact and delicacy. But if for one reason or another the engagement is broken, the bride price and small presents are returned to the fiancé in their entirety.

4. The Wedding of a Young Bambara Girl

The fiancé asks for the girl (1). -- The fourou fen (the bride price and small presents) have been paid, the fiancée is a grown young lady who has long been excised, and only rags remain of the beautiful yellow loincloth with black stripes which was received at the da woro, or festival that follows the sixth day after the circumcision. A kouara -- she has reached her full development and henceforth can only decline in grace and beauty, and her fiancé desires her. The

1. It happens sometimes that the family cannot refuse the suitor's request for the girl, although she does not have all her trousseau. In that case the wedding festival is put off, but she is led to her husband, and a little private celebration takes place on that day. When she has her trousseau she goes back to her family, and the big festival is held.

fourouboloma tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts, puts on his festive clothes and takes 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, to the father-in-law. The gesture is understood by everyone and means: "When will the wedding be?" A Negro has only one love: his interests; only one affect of affection: himself. In his egotism he thinks only of himself and of receiving cowrie shells; his heart is not unduly stirred. He thinks of his fields, his business, and his stomach. The members of the family, from the oldest to the youngest, have only these words on their lips: "How she handles the hoe! What a good tongue for praising merchandise and selling it; how well she cooks!" And it all stops there, for no one pays heed to her feelings. In vain will she cry that she detests her fiancé, that she does not love him at all, never could love him, and that she prefers another; in vain will she flee the /207/ paternal roof and take refuge with a sympathetic relative; she must obey! Her father and mother have received the oracle of the diviners; in accepting the sacrifice, the family boli have accepted the suitor, and they /the family/ cannot oppose the orders of their gods or, if one prefers the other term, their family fetishes (1).

1. Custom decrees that the girl spend one night with her fiancé 10 or 15 days before the wedding. Some families dispense with this practice. The whole procedure is carried out in privacy: the girl arrives at night, brought by a member of her family, and withdraws at dawn. The two following expressions denote this procedure: Ou tara di à tjéma ("they have gone to give her to her husband").

Moreover, I must admit that there are very few Bambara women who openly show their antipathy. They cannot resist paternal authority and freely give themselves to the man to whom they have been betrothed; "an ka lada do, it is our custom," they say, and the idea does not occur to them that there could be another.

4: Henry--228 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

585 Departure of the bride. Exorcism of her hut by the boli of the village. Her entrance into the village. The first night. -- It is night, the hour when families crouch in a circle around the gourds of to, or millet gruel, stuff themselves with food, and noisily suck their fingers. Why is it, then, that this evening the women hurry in such numbers to the public square with gourds on their heads? At every turning of the streets there are people who are cleaning their long flintlocks, and in the b'lon, or entry huts, there is the deafening noise of drums as the skins are stretched and they are tuned. And the cries that fill the village crack your ears and jar your nerves. What is it then? A young woman, a fiancée, who is struggling in the arms of two husky fellows and shrieking -- for appearances, since as soon as she is outside the walls her cries cease and she places on her head the long cloth (a present from her husband) from which she can make herself three loincloths and in very lively fashion follows the women and girls who are carrying her trousseau. The band of young men, with drums, trumpets, and guns, hurries after her, and there are songs of joy and hand clappings, and from time to time the long-drawn-out cry, "kouyo, kouyo," uttered by an old woman, tears the peace and silence of the night. /208/

585 789 778 And while the bride, in short steps, continues her triumphal march, a strange scene takes place in the village where she is going. The chief boli of the village has left its putrid hiding place, and while women, children, and the uninitiated, huddled in their huts, tremble at each roar given forth by its herald, it runs about the alleys in the hands of its initiates (1). This is not all; it goes into the husband's

1. Ou tara djira à tjéma k'a d'a ma: "They have gone to show her to her husband in order to give her to him." The real expression is as follows: A wéléla k'a se-n-don, A se-n-donna: "Her husband has summoned her in order to sleep with her. She has slept with her husband." The answer is: Fourou kera: "They got married."

court and enters the hut of the bride. At that instant the boli déou, sons of the boli, sing the sacred hymn and abandon themselves to their dances, and the god itself lies on the white cloth spread on the bed, on the mat where the poor girl soon will rest. Like every rite of this kind, this ceremony is called kéné salo, "to exorcise the place (2)," and its purpose is to drive out the harmful spirits who

> 2. Kéné, "surface," "plane," "floor," "court"; salo, "stroke gently with the hand"; this term denotes a movement of the hands that the sorcerers use when they are treating an invalid, "to make /ritual/ gestures."

might have evil intentions against the woman and her husband. For the husband it is also a means of publicly bearing witness to his faith in the boli and his love and his attachment for it, in short, a means of obtaining its favor and attaining a happy and fertile marriage.

The young woman and her retinue continue to walk very slowly along the winding paths, and in the distance, here and there, a gunshot, a clapping of hands, and the famous cry of "kouyo kouyo" can be heard; the cry comes near and again draws away, depending on the bends of the path, only to draw near again with a stronger burst. Finaliy they arrive at the edge of the fields, 200 to 300 meters at most from the village. The young men run to place themselves at the head of the procession, the bearers of the trousseau pass to the rear, the drums roll, and the horns of the band roar loudly, for this is the dance. But what a dance! The women, bent double, move their torsos back and forth in a manner which might best be compared with that of a worm that draws back and slowly stretches out; they glide over the ground without lifting /209/ their feet, leaving on the sand behind them a long trail as if a boa had passed by. With discouraging slowness, they go like this to the gate of the village, taking an hour, and often two, to cover these few hundred meters.

Covered with sweat and white with dust, the procession moves along the walls; here it is at the gate, firing guns, clapping hands,

585 shouting songs that partly drown out the rolling of the drums and the roaring of the horns of the band. The boli gives a last roar, and its priest carries it to its foul temple where the air breathed is warmed by the steam of hot blood and never cooled. The huts open their doors, and a stream of women, children, and young girls rush along the alleys and mingle their voices with those that are arriving. The [535] crowd of women divides into several groups, and again they bend double in unimaginable contorsions that a pen cannot describe; all parts of their bodies shake and move, as in a gentle wave that goes forward and folds back on itself. They glide over the ground raising a cloud of dust and, preceded by drums and in a blast of guns, they arrive thus slowly in the couple's inner court. Here everybody flinds food ready. The middle of the court is full of huge gourds of to, or gruel, dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water, and jugs full of d'lo, or millet beer, and while the newlyweds are enjoying their first love-making, drinking, eating, dancing, and shouting is going on near them. For I forgot to say that the young bride will long since have left her frenzied, howling mob. As soon as the boli has been put away, the women come to lead her to her dwelling (1). Before

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1. Every Bambara woman has her own hut separate from her husband's. A Bambara man who has only one wife sleeps in his wife's hut; if he has several, on the contrary, the woman who is summoned goes to lie in that of her husband. Some rich men provide each wife with a hut, an inner court, and a b'lon, or entry hut. In that case the first wife does not have a hut separate from that of her husband, and the husband goes to spend his nights with one or another as he chooses.

taking her into the marital sanctuary, where her husband is already

● 585 awaiting her, they undo her young girl's hair; they take off the cloth ribbon three /210/ fingers wide which is fastened in front at her waist and passes between the legs to fall behind in a loose, soft train; they unknot her belt of beads and bells; they help her to take her bath and lay her on the couch, rolled in a loincloth (1).

1. This ceremony terminating the wearing of a young girl's attire is often carried out in the village before leaving, especially if the village to which the bride is going is far away and will not be reached until late at night.

Suddenly all the guns are fired and many loud "kouyo kouyo" ring out, overpowering the songs, the noise of the drums, and that of feet beating on the ground in rhythm, and old women with wrinkled, parchment-like skin rush into the hut with warm water for ablutions(2).

2. This whole scene takes place in the morning, a few moments before sunrise.

Dressed in his new blouse, the groom leaves the dwelling of his bride, greets the strangers who fill his court, and sits down on the mat with the fourouboloma tigi and his close friends. The bride also quickly appears and walks across the court. She is dressed in [291] the loincloth of married women which is held at the waist by a thin cord while graceful red and white pompons, often marked with yellow and green lines, hang discreetly at the sides along her thighs. She walks with timid eyes, her head bowed, and a band of women story-tellers /griottes/ (singers) follow her with their songs of love; they tell of the delicacy of her skin, the elegance of her form, the breadth of her torso, the firmness of her breasts. There is still more -- and at the very least one would blush; the old women in back shake a large, bloody white cloth (3), which bears witness to her virginity

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3. Even those who have known their husbands before this day are honored in this fashion, for the family will have kept this cloth faithfully, and if there is occasion to unfold it, they are very proud.

before all. In a word, everybody praises the bride for having been [131] able to remain a virgin, but they praise her in Bambara, which means they do so in coarse terms, and in order to emphasize her virtue they present her with a bouquet of roses rolled in filth.

When the bride leaves the court, her maids of honor come to fetch her, and while the men stay and get drunk and the women continue to clap their hands, to sing at the top /211/ of their lungs, and to dance to the sound of the drums, trumpets, and guitars, she herself goes into the hut of friends to end the first night of her wedding in sleep. She may not go out for eight days; she takes her meals in the hut and spends her days sitting on a mat with a white veil on her head, spinning cotton in the company of her maids of honor (1).

[178 574]

1. Many have freed themselves from this custom. Those who submit to it -- and they are in the majority -- can see their families again after these eight days of imprisonment and stay with them for two weeks. The bride's trip to her family at this time is called bina kounna sago. A few weeks later she again spends four days -- sou nani yé -- with her parents, and a little later she stays with them for one night, sou kélen si.

The groom stays in his hut for the whole day following the first night, and just about everybody, men and women, come to pay him

585 their respects. It is chiefly the d'lo, or millet beer, that attracts them, but under these circumstances the Bambara forget that they are beggars always holding out their hands. Although the visitors eat, drink, and get drunk, they pay for at least a part of what they consume.

585 431 Through the intermediary of the fourouboloma tigi, each guest and visitor, man or woman, gives the couple a fourouboloma fara, or wedding present, in kind or in money. They know, after all, that this is a means -- and the best-- by which they can empty a jug of d'lo, then a second, and finally several.

585 I know nothing more taxing than a Bambara wedding, which lasts two, three days, and often eight, if the husband is rich or wants to appear so. As long as the festivities last, the bride and groom are in their respective huts, surrounded by people who are sweating from having eaten or drunk too much, in an atmosphere warmed by foul breaths, and where there is never any fresh air. They do not have a minute, not an instant, of peace, and they cannot even attend to [514] the wants of nature without being escorted by a numerous band. After each meal there is in their courts a deafening noise of drums, horns, and songs shouted by voices never in harmony, and their ears hear nothing but these sentences, which must be a torture to them in the long run: "May your marriage be happy, may hands and feet spring from it (may you have many children), may God preserve your /212/ health, may He grant you a long and vigorous old age. Thank you, thank you, you have received us well, you have not been sparing of the d'lo, I am full (nzé dé fara -- or again -- né fara dérén) (1)."

1. On the day of her wedding, a young woman talks only with the many women who have come to keep her company and with her maids of honor. When the time has come when she can talk, she is offered a hen.

5. Exhibition of the Bride's Trousseau on the Evening of the First Day

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Although the sun is high above the horizon, it is already without strength and life, and at the door of the entry hut to the couple's dwelling, drums and trumpetings rage and give honor to the young woman who is seated in the midst of them on a tiny stool. She allows people to admire her adornment, her beads and her jewels, her rings of copper and tin and sometimes also of gold and silver; she allows them to rave about the shoes with soles three fingers thick, which are a gift of the groom, and about her artistic, finely braided coiffure, [302] a mountain of hair forming a crest across her head which ends in two thin locks in front of and behind each ear -- cavalryman's helmet with a broken chin strap, one might say, all ebony and thrown on its side. But she has given her heart and her promise, and she covers her face with the platter of braided grass that she holds in her right hand.

[534] The horns of antelopes, cows, and bulls, which are the Bambara trumpets, cease to roar, the drums stop booming, and a group of women (usually storytellers /griottes/, for they sniff out festivals and orgies with the scent of a vulture who smells carrion for 20 leagues) place themselves behind her and sing songs of love.

Preceded by a band of singers and a group of drums (2), the

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2. This parade of the trousseau across the village only occurs at rich weddings when the trousseau is really worth the trouble. Most frequently only one exhibition takes place, the one in the evening.

file djiralaou (the women who show the gourds) have run through the village all morning, going from hut to hut to display the trousseau. That is not enough; under the eyes of the bride it is displayed again, exhibited one last time, and without fail the connoisseurs /213/ assess it and, without any embarrassment whatsoever, set an accurate value on it (1).

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1. Sometimes this exhibition is made before the arrival of the young bride.

The shoes with soles three fingers thick, the white blouse and the loincloth that the bride wears, together with the koundougou fini, a huge piece of cloth that can yield three or four loincloths, are a gift from the husband; the rest -- cloth, gourds, pottery, mortars for grinding millet, cotton to be carded and spun, all come to her from her family. The size of the trousseau depends a little on the family's fortune, but as a general rule it can be stated that at her marriage every young woman receives some ten tafé (pieces of cloth, one and a half to two meters long by one meter wide, which the women wind around their bodies), some 15 gourds, and for ornaments at least a bracelet and a bead necklace (2). One is sometimes present at

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2. Brides from rich families receive a slave called gouadani to do the cooking, as well as a cow, small chains for their feet, bracelets, a bead necklace with a piece of amber the size of a hen's egg, and two small gold earrings.

hilarious scenes, for among the crowd of the curious that press around, there are inevitably some rejected suitors. They have put aside hatred and rancour, for the boli of the village protects her. Yet they love her; deep in their hearts they keep all their love for her, and it is certainly they, the wounded ones, who take her free hand and pour onto her knees a few handfuls of cowrie shells.

When the vainglorious exhibition of the trousseau is finished, the fourouboloma tigi or the guardian of the wedding presents, gives the mistress of song 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, and the guns are fired one last time. The young bride gets up at once, her platter of grass still over her face, and gliding with her heels on the ground, not lifting her feet, she goes into her dwelling followed by two or three matrons, and then she disappears in a light cloud of dust. The crowd withdraws, for to follow her or even to stay where they are would be indiscreet.

4: Henry--284 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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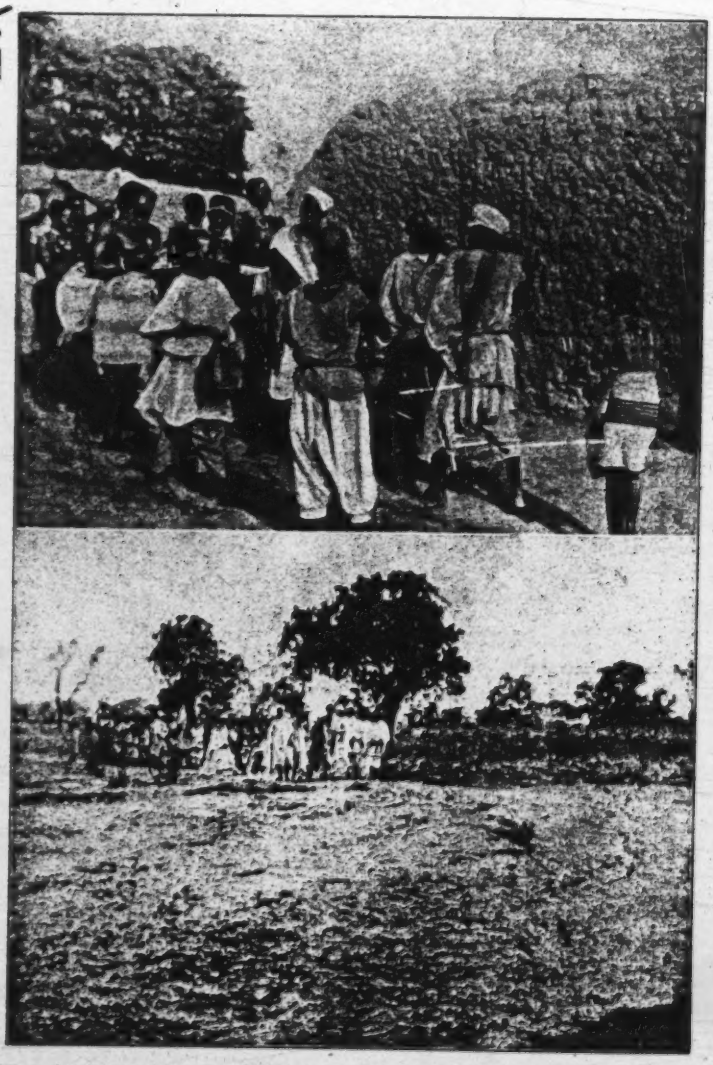

Bambara wedding: the guests go to thank the young bride after the meal. Above: Bambara wedding: procession of a young bride going to the home of her groom.